



## Notes from the ESRI UC 2008 Exhibits Floor

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### Name Game

As I walked the floor, I noted that we are running out of names for geospatial companies! We are mixing and matching too many of the same single syllable words, creating too many companies with similar names that I can't keep straight. I have trouble with EveryScape, EveryBlock, AnyStreet, EveryPlace, EarthScape, Earth Tech... I also have trouble with any company with GIS in its name or initials. That said, some names are truly great and memorable and describe what the company does. Among those: DigitalGlobe, MetaCarta and NAVTEQ. I was annoyed when the company lost the "TECH" to "TEQ" but I've since gotten over it! (ABS)

### [Adapx: The Pen is Mightier than the Laptop](#)

Last year, I noted that this was one of the "wow" technologies on the ESRI exhibit floor, with people lined up three and four deep to try out the "digital ink" technology. Briefly, the user prints a map with standard paper and a pattern is placed with the map printout that consists of small dots on a grid. A digital pen records the user's movements (redlining and other map annotation) in relation to these dots, which can then be uploaded from the pen to ArcMap and amazingly, the annotations appear in their correct location as they were drawn onto the paper. Now, what is the real competition for products which require you to bring a laptop to the field with your map-based information? A paper map, for sure. It's lighter and the form factor is certainly "thinner." So, what Adapx has done is make it easy to digitize information with a pen that captures and stores the information. This year people still lined up three and four deep to try it out, and it continues to be a great alternative to lugging the laptop to the field. (JF)

So, what's new? How about support for Excel? That's right, make the forms, print the forms, fill them in with the special pen, dock the pen and the filled-in form information is digital. One big distinguisher of the Adapx solution from competitors? Competitors don't allow end users to make and print their own forms as needed. What's on the horizon? Maybe something to do with PDF. (ABS)

### [Pixia](#)

This small imagery enabling company popped out on the scene a few years ago with some amazing tools to work with large image sets. Then it got very quiet. Why? Most of its users are military. Still, the company is innovating. Representatives showed me something that looked like an oblique view of a movie of traffic in a city. But it wasn't a movie; it was a sort of digital flip book of time series images. Pixia's technology makes it look like a movie, but an analyst can flip to, and examine, any full resolution from it in milliseconds. I can imagine how the military would like that... (ABS)

### Busy, Busy at BlackBerry

I was on the lookout for booths that were always busy, even at lunch. One of them was the [BlackBerry](#) booth. With a set of partners showing off apps, there was always buzz there. And per the "BlackBerry is for business" image, there were no flashy videos or toys. (ABS)

An example of one of the apps shown: [Freeance](#) Mobile 2.0 offers a way to take maps to the field with your BlackBerry. Consistent with BlackBerry's "always-connected" philosophy, Freeance's Mobile Servers connect to ArcGIS or ArcGIS Server and can display maps as well as some standard functions such as selecting layers and displaying attributes. And with BlackBerry's built-in GPS, positional accuracy for routing applications is greatly enhanced. Now, you will need to be in range of cellular service and have a supported model. The cost is based on the number of Blackberrys deployed. For 20 Blackberrys, for example, the cost is \$9950. (JF)

### **Stayed Home**

I can't say why, but newly renamed [ERDAS](#) was not in attendance. The surveying part of Leica was there, as were a few survey firms, including Topcon. Their booths were very quiet; perhaps the Survey and Engineering crew had already gone home when I wandered by? (ABS)

### **Nice to see you!**

[OpenStreetMap](#) had a booth, and while I missed Steve Coast, I witnessed one of his colleagues patiently explaining the concept of a free-to-use, worldwide dataset created by volunteers to skeptical North Americans. Europeans, she noted, had heard of the effort, so the ESRI UC was a great educational opportunity for the project. Also of note: mapping parties are planned for the Boston area! (ABS)

### **History Revealed: [LizardTech](#) and Historic Aerials**

What are those old aerial photos good for anyway? Well, [Historic Aerials](#) by [NETR](#) has put those old aerials up on the net and aided by LizardTech's ability to compress and serve images fast, the company is showing historical perspectives of cities and regions where it can obtain coverage from years ago. In a simple interface, archives of primarily USGS aerial images are served, and using LizardTech's "swipe" feature you can compare and contrast images from two or more dates. NETR is processing as many images as possible using LizardTech's GeoExpress Server. For applications of change detection, remediation or urban planning, this is the place to start.

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